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total social order of China, the disintegration of the traditional family system and the abolition of the imperial examination system for recruiting the ruling elite became contributing factors to the dislocation of the traditional social structure.

There was no change in the social composition of the rural population in the past several decades. As of old, the village community consisted of farm laborers at the bottom and landlords at the top. Peasant landowners and tenants constituted the bulk of the village population; and village peddlers, merchants, and artisans were members of peasant families, most of which owned land; the village gentry, that is to say the local leaders, were mostly retired officials or educated members of landlords' or rich peasants' families.[8]

However, the growth of rural population without a comparable increase in arable land together with more opportunities for employment in the cities caused the migration of some peasants to the urban centers. The continued high premium placed on learning, practical or otherwise, induced the wealthier rural inhabitants to send their children to city schools

8. Olga Lang, Chinese Family and Society, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1946, p. 68.

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which offered new opportunities. Thus, the cities became the centers from which the forces of change radiated into the surrounding countryside. 369 178

Some of the rural immigrants became permanent residents in the cities; others returned to their home villages. Among the permanent residents, some left their families in the country while others brought their immediate families (wives and children) to the cities. In either case, it meant the breakup of family and clan relations. Industrial work and other city employment changed the outlook of these rural people; new professions such as modern medicine, law, engineering, and banking attracted the attention of those who otherwise might have been occupied in the study of the Confucian Classics. This was especially true after Confucian training had been found impractical in a modern society and not in keeping with the changing conditions. Education in the secondary schools and universities, however inadequate and artificial it might seem, was designed for better citizenship.[9] Their curricula opened a new and different world, far more interesting and intelligible to the younger generation than the classics of old. If modern education had not 871 178

9. Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, the Haskell Lectures, University of Chicago, 1933, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1934; Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbanks, China's Response to the West, A Documentary Survey 1839-1923, Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1954.

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every effort to make a marriage ceremony festive. 527
Practical jokes were played on the bridegroom, traditional songs were sung, and the guests, particularly the men, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The births of male children were often celebrated as were the initiations of boys into adulthood, betrothals, and the like. In modern times the government of the Republic of China has decreed certain national holidays, but these were little observed by the farm villages.

In addition to these occasions for relaxation, 517
there were activities which interested some of the villagers and helped to vary their lives. Itinerant dramatic troupes occasionally performed, and the storyteller spinning out his tales to the villagers until very recently was often seen. The election of a headman for the village often involved political maneuvering and a town meeting. Pilgrimages to famous mountains or shrines were often undertaken in the slack agricultural season for religious reasons or purely for relaxation. Perhaps the most universal recreation was, as in all illiterate communities, gossip and desultory conversation about the weather, the crops, the iniquity of the government, local disputes, and, on their rare occurrence, lawsuits involving fellow villagers. Despite the grim struggle for 156
survival, the average villager tended to be cheerful, self-respecting, with a robust sense of humor. He went through life with a continuous concern for his own "face" or prestige among his fellows and with the strong determination that, despite all, the fortunes of his family might steadily improve.

C. Urban Life

City life, although it meant a different pattern of 369
work, was closely akin to life in the villages. Town

and city dwellers kept their ties with their native villages, returned there whenever possible, and many saw commercial activity in the town only as means of the acquisition of sufficient wealth to buy farming land upon their return to the village. The town population, then, is mostly made up of artisans and peasants, plus a small number of landlords, retired officials, county functionaries, and established merchant families. The county seats (hsien capitals) were the centers for tax collection and administration of the surrounding farm-villages and also served as market towns where the peasant might sell his crop and purchase the manufactured goods he could not produce.

Town life for the average artisan was as meager as that of his relatives in the village. Long hours, hard work, low pay, few holidays were the lot of most, and living conditions were generally poorer and more crowded than those in the villages. Proprietors of many shops required their employees to live on the premises, so that they seldom visited their families. The diet of the town dweller was as poor as that of the poor farmer -- mostly cereals, vegetables, and some condiments, and meat and fruit on holidays only. Brief holidays were allowed at the New Year, the Ch'ing-ming festival, the mid-Autumn festival, and the Dragon Boat festival. On these occasions, townspeople usually tried to return to their villages; if this was impossible they enjoyed such delicacies as they could afford and strolled the streets, perhaps visiting friends and attending seasonal fairs and theaters.

Life in the towns was, then, closely linked with village life. But in the provincial capitals, such as

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Kaifeng, Changsha, and Canton, life in some respects has been greatly altered by the modernization that has spread from the coastal to the inland cities. The streets are paved, and schools, newspapers, movies, and radio make the people more aware of the outside world than their cousins in the towns and villages. In the cities, major industries built large dormitories for workers, labor unions and political clubs developed as new foci for social activity. Yet the living conditions grew worse as workers moved into the cities. Crowding reached unbelievable proportions. The only comparable figures are for Chengtu, a city outside the Central-South area, but they suggest the dimensions of this problem in all urban centers. Chengtu, with predominantly one-storied buildings, had a population density of 50,000 per square mile as compared with 22,500 per square mile in New York City.[8] One survey suggests that workers in the newer industries were somewhat better off than workers in the traditional trades,[9] but their traditional holidays were shortened without, in most cases, the introduction of a six-day week. In the crowded cities the festivals of the agricultural year continued to determine the holidays, and (although national holidays were increasingly observed), like the town dwellers, city dwellers tried to return to their families villages for at least one of the holidays. Another link to one's native place was the system of clubs composed of those city-dwellers who had a common provincial

8. Winfield, op. cit., p. 88. These figures would seem to be for the period 1945-47.

9. Lang, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

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origin; the clubs operated hostels and sometimes arrangements for mutual aid. Secret societies provided another focus of social life, particularly in the towns and cities. Their rituals, passports, and secret signs of greeting were all subordinate to their basic aim, which was to provide members with security-through-association, with an insurance against the hazards of a disintegrating and increasingly predatory society. 369 575

It will be noted that the ties of kinship and custom were strong even between the large modern cities and the farm villages. The ways of life tended increasingly to diverge, yet one of the strongest cohesive forces of all was the common set of attitudes and values which, even when change has been accounted for, held together all Chinese of village and town and city. 369

D. The Influence of Communism

In discussing Communist efforts to alter the Chinese way of life, it should be stressed that our material is unsatisfactory. Statistics, declarations, news releases give few realistic details of life in the villages under Communist domination, and most refugees from Communist China have come from the citie 668

First of all, the farmer's annual routine is basically unchanged. Pilot collectives are in operation, but these are few and have no immediate bearing on the farmer's work year. The most striking change in the farmer's life is the new network of associations which the government has imposed upon him and the daily barrage of advice and exhortation to which he is subjected. No longer does he cultivate his land in the manner of his ancestors with the assistance of his family, his clan, and his neighbors. He no longer

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crease his family's land holdings is checked by fear lesthe be re-classified as a "rich peasant" and be subject to higher taxes and other pressures. Yet what the Communists deplore as the peasant's "spontaneous capitalistic tendency" has not been crushed, and the landholdings of the more enterprising grow in size.[15] 668 425

The effort to force various forms of co-operative work have not been completely successful. 668 474

> "...when a serious team-use of labor, tools, and farm animals was attempted, a variety of unsatisfactory results emerged; quarrels among the families interfered with efficient output; no one assumed responsibility for the upkeep of communal property; the claims of inefficient members violated the sense of equity of the more efficient..."[16]

Yet the villagers' way of life has been greatly altered by the intervention of the government, through the cadres, in all social, economic, and political activities. The pressure to conform, at least outwardly, is formidable. Self-chosen leisure time activities are few, meetings occupy a great deal of time, and attendance at harangues by Party cadres, entertainment furnished by traveling theatrical groups (all with their ideological message) take up more of his 517 668 369

15. Rostow, op. cit., p. 152, cites the Pekíng People's Daily, Feb. 15, 1954.

16. Rostow, op. cit., p. 84.

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leisure. The slack winter season may now find him in winter school or involved in a community work project directed by the local cadre.

Settlement of accounts before the New Year holiday now means payment of taxes and the sale to the government of most of the balance of the farmer's grain, for which he receives coupons. The cadres carry this out at the village level.[17] The New Year festival itself is characterized by some traditional acitivites, modified to promote government aims, and by some new features. The peasant may buy New Year's pictures to decorate his house, but they will probably be romanticized portraits of Mao and other Communist heroes rather than the colorful deities of former days.[18] He may decorate his gate with paired mottoes, but the mottoes will no longer carry the old wishes for long life, happiness, and wealth, but exhortations to conform to Communist standards.[19] The government may allow some additional foods for the season, but gambling is forbidden, and social life is no longer restricted to family and friends. In Hunan, the peasants were urged to organize their own dramatic troupes to play the approved repertoire, and travelling troupes brought dramas to the villages. The cadres organized "cultural lectures" and mobile movie teams showed instructive films. The old exchange of visits with relatives in nearby towns now has its Communist counterpart: interchange of visits between urban and rural workers' groups to observe one another's progress in Communist reconstruction.[20]

17. SCMP 979, Feb. 2, 1955, p. 30.
18. Enlightenment Daily, Jan. 23, 1955, p. 2.
19. Cf. the collection of mottoes in Hua-nan t'ung-shu, [South China Almanac], Canton, 1953, p. 32.
20. Enlightenment Daily, Jan. 23, 1955, p. 2.

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The seasonal short pilgrimage, in company, to some nearby shrine also has, in Hunan, its Communist counterpart: a mass pilgrimage from the city of Changsha to Mao Tse-tung's native village, which is being built up as a national shrine.[21] Despite its frontal attack on the old familism, the Communist government last year provided special trains to take city dwellers back to their native villages for the holiday; a mass exodus was reported from Peking.[22]

Ch'ing-ming is no longer an approved festival, presumably because of its function as a celebration of kinship ties and family continuity. The next approved traditional holiday is the Dragon Boat festival in June. The boat races have been revived, and the poet Ch'ü Yüan, now a "People's hero martyred in protest against a corrupt feudal regime," is the focus of celebrations.[23] The moon festival in autumn is also celebrated with extra food allowances and "cultural" activities. The various anniversaries of the Chinese Communists and of the world Communist movement probably do not break into the agricultural working year, but may be occasions for special propaganda arranged by the local cadre. It will be seen that the pattern of living in the villages has been drastically altered; what remains of the old pattern is precisely what the government and the Party permits in the interest of morale or adapts in the interest of their rural program of change and indoctrination.

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21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.; also, SCMP 972, 1954, p. 21.
23. SCMP 1075, June 23, 1955, p. 25.

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The elite of the towns and cities are the functionaries of the government and Party. We know little of the pattern of their private lives. But, if the badge of the old Chinese bureaucratic elite was a leisurely and cultivated air, the badge of the new is a full briefcase and an air of purposeful, energetic activity. Their incomes permit their families a life somewhat easier than that granted the rest of the urban population, but they are constantly under discipline, watched by their colleagues, obliged to meet work quotas and to submit to continuous indoctrination and re-indoctrination. Party and government workers are urged to use the New Year holiday to plan their work for the year to come.

The bulk of the old middle class may have survived, but its activities have been increasingly restricted by government controls and the growth of government producing and marketing facilities. They are a tough and tenacious group, but their old comfortable life is already threatened and, as a class, they are scheduled for extinction.[28]

The growing cities now appear to be replacing the country as the goal of the ambitious. It is likely that, as urbanization and industrialization proceed, the cities rather than the farm villages will determine, as the Communists plan, the mores, the patterns of living for society as a whole.

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28. Rostow, op. cit., pp. 162-64.